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ART AND PROGRESS

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Published by the American Federation of Arts
1741 New York Ave., Washington, D. C.

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE **\$2.00 A YEAR**

VOL. V NOVEMBER 1913 **No. 1**

FREE ART

By the time this number of ART AND PROGRESS comes from the press free art will be a reality. As logical and rational as the abolitionment of the tariff on art may seem, it has only been obtained as the result of a long and hard fought battle. From 1832 to 1841, from 1846 to 1857 and again from 1894 to 1897, paintings and sculpture were admitted free of duty, but all of the other years from 1789 almost to the present, as shown by a table published elsewhere in these pages, their importation has been taxed. This has been in spite of the protest of the artists that they did not want protection and of the thinking people of the nation that art was a factor

in education and uplift. Strangely enough the opposition to the abolishment of the tariff was in the Senate, which, it has been truly said, ought to represent fairly well the intelligence of the country. It was this body which attempted to impose a duty on art against the rulings of the House of Representatives, presenting as a sufficient argument in excuse the old contention that art is a luxury and therefore may be justly taxed.

Senator Root, Senator Lodge and Mr. Underwood were all strong advocates of free art and fought valiantly for the removal of the tariff before the Joint Conference Committee where the battle was really won. To these enlightened legislators the nation owes a debt of gratitude.

Emphasizing the value of art as a national asset Senator Lodge said:

“Look back over the past and consider what has lived and what has died, what is it that remains to us from all these great civilizations which have gone before—their art and their literature. The battles and wars of the Greeks are of no moment today except to the lover of history, but the thoughts and the literature, the drama and the art of Greece are the greatest inheritance of civilized man.”

Senator Root, pressing the right of the nation to the heritage of art, presented the matter from a different standpoint and one which it would be well for all to remark and remember:

"I think no one," he declared, "can observe the poor people of some of the European countries without realizing that they are happy largely because they love everything beautiful, because all about them in nature and art, they find the means to gratify their taste for beauty. The greatest happiness in life comes from things not material. It does not come from eating and drinking and wearing fine clothes; it comes from the elevation of character, from the love of beauty gratified, from the many influences that enoble mankind." And, he added, "I think we have no higher duty than by our legislation to promote the opening to Americans of every opportunity to secure these means of happiness."

These are arguments which carry conviction and they prevailed. We shall in a very brief time have free art—free art for the nation.

But it should not be forgotten that the battle waged so successfully was begun some years ago, and that but for the

pressure brought to bear from outside, indicative of the sentiment of the people, the ablest of arguments might have been made to deaf ears and without result.

The American Free Art League, comprising men and women of prominence and authority in every State of the Union, was organized in 1905, and for several years carried on a systematic campaign of education to the end that art might come into the country unrestricted. Congress made some concessions, but more important still, an excellent foundation was laid for what proved a critical battle in connection with the present tariff legislation. In the meantime the American Federation of Arts was formed with its chapters in all parts of the country and its medium of communication and publicity, ART AND PROGRESS. These two organizations with the Association of American Painters and Sculptors, Inc., reached during the past summer practically everyone in the country interested in art. A comprehensive statement giving facts and arguments, and recommending definite action, was broadly circulated and found effectual. In the face of such universal opinion, privately and publicly expressed in resolutions, letters and daily in the press, opposition faded and art was made free. This victory should, indeed, mark an epoch.

ART AND PROGRESS

ART AND PROGRESS begins its fifth year of publication with this November number. To the past only brief reference need be made; it has been a period of gradual growth and development. Our purpose has been and still is to make ART AND PROGRESS a magazine, not only for artists, but for all who appreciate beauty in its varying forms and who desire to keep in touch with this phase of life.

During the coming year we shall endeavor to increase, not only the scope, but the usefulness of the magazine, continuing the regular features and adding new ones, presenting subjects of vital and timely interest from more than one

standpoint, noting, as far as possible, all that is significant, and giving more space even than heretofore to illustrations. Fuller announcement of the plans for the coming year will be made in the next number.

NOTES

AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT

An interesting experiment with reference to the emplacement of sculpture was tried in New Haven during the past summer. Bela L. Pratt had been commissioned to execute a statue of Nathan Hale. As soon as the figure was modeled a plaster cast, bronzed to represent the work when completed, was placed on the campus in order that it might be ascertained whether or not it would be both in harmony with its surroundings and satisfactory in itself.

With reference to this experiment Mr. George Dudley Seymour writes as follows: "Probably the great bulk of antique sculpture was cut in position. This is one reason for the superiority of most of the old work over the modern work. When cut in position, the sculptor is able to judge the scale of his figure and the influence of surrounding objects upon it. Furthermore, in the diffused light of out-of-doors, a piece of sculpture presents quite a different appearance from what it does in the shadows and cross lights of a studio. The great bulk of modern sculpture is produced in studios and never tried out, so to speak, in the position for which it is designed. For this reason modern sculpture is more often defective in scale and more often fails to harmonize with its surroundings than antique sculpture. It is now beginning to be recognized that in order to secure the best results in the field of sculpture there must be a return to the old practice.

"Feeling that it was desirable that the Hale statue should be tried in position before being cast in bronze, so as to enable the effect of the figure to be judged in its relation to Connecticut Hall against which it is to be placed, and so that the height and character of the pedestal